Speech delivered by
GENERAL K. M. CARIAPPA (Retired),
at Sapru Hall, New Delhi, on October 7, 1961,
AT THE HINDU MAHASABHA CONVENTION

This is not a "Sermon"—nor is it a list of "starry-eyed-ideologies". This is just plain speaking by a simple soldier to remind ourselves of our sacred duty to our Country, to safeguard our independence, to leave for our future generations one, economically, industrially, morally prosperous India of INDIANS.

There are times in the histories of people when those whom God had given opportunities to hold high positions in life although now not all charged with high responsibilities should plainly speak their minds.

Our civilization and our culture are ancient. Our Philosophy of Truth and Non-violence, of the spirit of tolerance, of live and let live, of love and loyalty for mankind, of forget and forgive is glorious. All these are worthy of sacrifices in every form, for their preservation. In this service let us remind ourselves of the inevitable need for sensible modifications in our ways of life to conform to the rapidly changing patterns of society.

In the early stages of our struggle for Independence, the beginning emphasized that success or failure depended on our unity or the lack of it. Today our countrymen must face the difficulties which confront us and which will appear in the future, as a united nation, determined not to be distracted in our march forward by considerations of separateness of any kind whatever.

We got our Independence after years of political struggle—which struggle was conducted not only by the politicians but by everyone of us too, in our own unobtrusive humble ways in whatever walks of life we rendered our service. It is our duty to act as a united team of INDIANS to keep this Independence for all time. Here is a glorious and sacred adventure in which we of today have the good fortune to be active partners of.

India is in danger. We are in danger, from moral and intellectual apathy, the mortal enemies of mankind which sap the will and darken the understanding and breed evil dissensions. We are in danger of "disunity" because of the communal mindedness of some. We are in danger of lack of sustained efforts on our part to build our country, by being too conservative and orthodox. We are in danger of being a people of "destructive critics" and NOT co-operative members of the glorious team of Nation-builders. Unless these are withstood, we shall lack moral strength and moral unity sufficient to save our liberties.

Our present dangers are a challenge to us, but in meeting challenges of history, peoples grow in greatness. The dangers demand of all Indians, community of thought and purpose. They demand a restoration of the moral order from which alone true social order can derive.

We are members one of another dependent even for our daily bread on the work of many. From the community we have our livelihood, culture protection in reign of law. To the community we owe a just return of loyalty and service.

Each of us has a duty to defend the community against evil designs and aggression and to preserve for our children that which was given to us. Each of us has a duty to deal selflessly and loyally with our fellows in the transactions of life. Each has a duty to ourselves and to our fellows, of honest work. The

development of a true united community amongst ourselves and with all peoples of goodwill is the one way to peace at home and abroad.

A new and determined effort from all Indians is needed to advance national moral standards. This advance has to come from individuals in their personal and vocational relationships, in and through the lives of families, in and through all our voluntary associations, trade unions, employer's and professional groups, the organisation of women, of servicemen, and all the societies which our people have created to express their cultural, social, industrial and economic interests. There should be an adequate understanding of the nature of law and of its necessity as the principle of order in a free society. All of us must take the active and loyal concern in public affairs proper to citizens of a free society, imbued with a high sense of civic duties and discipline. We must examine our conscience and our motives in all our associations with our fellows. If each does his part, the whole community will be renewed. We must think now of the future into which our children go, that we may shape it well and wisely for them.

We must remember those whose labours and sacrifices opened this land to the use of mankind, those who bore and reared the children of our nation, those who died in battles—political and otherwise—for us, bringing splendour to our country; those who worked with mind and muscle for the heritage which we, please God, shall hold and enlarge, for our children and their children and so on to eternity.

We must work ceaselessly in unity to make India strong by having a high standard of morale, by providing for economic stability, industrial self sufficiency and physical and moral virility in the people.

We must give our best to help the less fortunate people of our country—who had been denied the benefits of Education and so opportunities for enjoying the fruits of our Independence, by intensifying our plans for their Education, so as to prepare them to qualify for equal opportunities in Government services and not merely "talk" of "backward class" and "forward class"—but in this work we must NOT lower our standards of Education—administrations, etc. merely to give these opportunities. Our standards must be kept high always. We must make up our minds on the system of Education for our youth which must be "All India" and not "State-wise" and stick to the policy laid down for another ten years at least without making any changes. We must insist that our politicians do not interfere in the work of those who are entrusted to implement the policies laid down by the Government, particularly with Education. There should be a code of Honour with them in this matter.

We must be ruthless in putting down corruption and nepotism, dishonesty and communalism no matter who commits these crimes. Hang people who are known criminals in these respects. This will soon stop the rot.

We must endeavour to instill in our minds the urgent need for individual and collective discipline and an unimpeachable National Character—neither of which we can today boast of—being the possessors of, to any marked degree. We have got to work not in terms of so many hours a day or so many days in the week but in terms of the job in hand and that done well and soon, even though it may mean our having to go without food and rest on occasions. Let us not please live merely on the glories of our past culture and civilisation. Let us live them today and add on more lustre to them. Taken by and large we are generally idle and want everything done for us by some one else. Most of us live for ourselves. **This will not do—if we are to be a great nation,** which we can and will be if we paid more active heed to matters of interest to INDIA and INDIANS—and much less thought to our own languages—community—and personal interests. It was a sad day—very sad—when these "Linguistic States" were born. That day sounded the "death-knell" for the unity of India. We can still rectify this "hari-kiri" we committeed – if we, as a people have the moral grit and gumption to act and soon. Let us abolish "Linguistic States" as such—and group them into larger units for administrative economy and convenience.

We are a democracy and as such only that political party is voted into power by us in which the majority have the confidence and the faith to rule the country wisely and well. It behoves such a party to listen to and respect public opinion, so long as such opinion is balanced and is not merely destructively critical. We have a right to speak out our minds frankly and fearlessly, but alas we have no "public opinion" worth the name. It is either a feeling of "fear" and/or a feeling of "insecurity" which makes the people to restrain their observations on "men and matters". Patriotic feelings are not the monopoly of those in politics alone.

The party in power must have healthy and strong opposition and unless there is this it is understandable that such a party will inevitably become "dictatorial" because there is no one to tell them firmly that their methods are not good for the country when the people are not satisfied with them. It is not good for the progress of any democratic country—if only

one political party rules it indefinitely—for in such circumstances "staleness" will set in and this is not good for any people. Should there be no party other than the one voted into power, strong enough to replace that party if it has been too long in power, the people then must insist on having a NO—party Government. What I am getting at is that the people should shape their destinies and not be just dumb "hero-worshippers" just because there is no other party big enough to form a Government. Public opinion must be strong enough and sustained so as not to hesitate to change its Government—if the people have no confidence in it. Mere sentiments and emotions will NOT help.

Let us NOT please "break our heads" over the language issue nor over the "Inter-State Border" issues. Let us not impose Hindi on unwilling people. Let the people themselves, in due course decide what they want as our National Language. In the meantime whilst we must all learn our respective Regional Languages – all of us should learn elementary Sanskrit – use English as the main medium of Education throughout India alongside regional languages and for communication Inter-State and between the States and the Centre—for some years to come. There is nothing un-patriotic or un-nationalistic in keeping on English. Let there be no talk, nor wasting of time and money in settling "border issues". This subject must be closed down immediately—and "buried" for ever.

We are still a very young country—young politically—just 14 years old. We should not be in a hurry to produce a "welfare state"—bringing in all kinds of so-called reforms and refinements overnight —all at the same time without ensuring of having a strong foundation of a united people. Let us proceed patiently—but wisely. It took England 600 years to get adult franchise and Russia has taken nearly 44 years to achieve for her people the standard of life which they are reported to be enjoying today.

Looking back in retrospect, on our achievements in the last fourteen years—we can with pride feel that our Industry is stepping up very well. Our young men are rapidly becoming efficient technicians. Their products in our factories are splendid. Taken by and large there appears to be a measure of progress—very small though it may be—in the standard of living of a certain section of the man in the street. Our buses and trains are invariably full of much better clad passengers. Restaurants and eating places in towns and cities are—always very well patronised by the working class—Cinema houses are never empty. All these show that there is a little more money in the pockets of the less fortunate ones—than they had before Independence. Our Air-Services are good. Our Railways have certainly come on a great deal better than before. Great advances in Medical aid to the masses have been made. Infant mortality is on the decrease and period of longevity of life is on the increase. Roads are improving every where. BUT alas ! we cannot feel the same way for our Education policy and of the Standard of our administration all round. These are both—far from even satisfactory. They are disappointing. These have got to be put right soon if we are to progress and we do want to progress.

Political cohesion and national unity are absolutely essential for National Security. We can have these only if we can always have men of integrity at the helm of affairs—have a sound Education Policy and have good administration. Only a united India can be strong—and only a strong India can and will provide a higher standard of living to our millions and only such an India can become the beacon light to the millions of this wide world, showing them the path to eternal happiness and peace using her spiritual wealth. Let us not please bring in Religion to influence our political life. Religion is purely personal. Let us work together as Indians at all times—with courage having faith in ourselves and faith in GOD. Let us intensify the education of our masses to help them realise their duties to themselves and to the Nation, to help them fully appreciate the need to have only men of integrity to govern our country. Let us educate them to vote in the coming elections only for the right man of quality and character, of known integrity, honesty—sense of duty and selflessness and NOT to one whose only qualifications are to "bribe" innocent voters with money and make fanciful promises. Let us make them "defence conscious" to see that in the voting for a person standing for election they support amongst others—those who will work in our Parliaments to safeguard our Country's defence. Let us please ensure that we say and do nothing which will harm our Independence—which we MUST keep for ever. Let us be loyal to our philosophical and cultural heritage and keep "India's-ism" upper most at all times, to leave for our future generations a united—prosperous and peaceful India. Provide strength for peace.

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